

Letters

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checked out and renewed from the SJPL during this period, making it one of the busiest public library systems in the nation. Over 12,700 programs attended by over 315,000 people were offered within the SJPL during this period.

Results of the biennial City of San José Community Satisfaction Survey showed the SJPL as the top-rated city service in 2009 with 74 percent of the respondents rating the SJPL's service as either excellent or good. However, in the same survey, a noticeable drop in the level of satisfaction with the number of hours branch libraries are open was observed from 2007 to 2009. Among the major California public library systems, the SJPL already has one of the lowest operating incomes per capita; further cuts in its budget will make it nearly impossible for the SJPL to deliver the high quality services that San José residents expect and deserve.

A hallmark of a great city is a great library. The SJPL serves many critical roles in support of our city. We urge you to in turn take action to support our outstanding San José Public Library. You can do so in any of the following ways:

- Contact your council member and/or the mayor to express your support for your library. Let them know that reductions to the SJPL's budget, staff, and services are not acceptable in a great city like San José. (Contact information for the mayor and members of the San José City Council can be found at www.sanjoseca.gov/council.asp.)
- Donate your time, money, and/or materials to the SJPL. Opportunities are listed at www.sjpl.org/donate.
- Apply to become a member of the San José Public Library Commission: www.sjpl.org/commission.
- Encourage other San José city agencies and non-governmental city organizations to explore partnerships with the SJPL to leverage resources.

Jean Lee
Vice chair, San José
Public Library Commission

City offices closed for Memorial Day holiday

San José City Hall and other city offices will close on Monday, May 30 in honor of Memorial Day. All city offices will reopen on Tuesday, May 31. The Police and Fire Departments, along with other critical city services, will remain unaffected by the closure.

All city libraries will be closed and will resume regular hours on Tuesday, May

Kudos for keeping Evergreen graffiti free

Editor,

I wanted to send a "thank you" note to whomever is patrolling the Evergreen area neighborhoods and removing graffiti within hours of it showing up on walls, fence posts etc.

Last week, I stepped outside to go to work and there was a plethora of graffiti plastered all along white fence posts in the cul-de-sac and street signs in front of my home. It stopped me in my tracks as I was just horrified at the amount.

While I was driving to work I was trying to think of who to call to help remove it or help provide me with the necessary paint removers, however, I arrived home that night to find it all gone ... including what was on the street signs.

I am not sure who was the wonderful and caring person who took the time to remove this but I wanted to thank this person for helping keep Evergreen beautiful. Thank you!

I wish I could have seen who it was and I would have personally thanked them. However, they are "invisible" so I am writing this note and hopefully they will read it and know their actions were very much appreciated.

Very appreciative Evergreen neighbors

Editor's note: At this time, residents may call the San José Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services 24-hour hotline to report graffiti in their neighborhood at (408) 277-2758. The City Manager's Proposed 2011-12 Budget Proposal recommended that the city's graffiti abatement services be outsourced.

Correction:

The correct website for the Rebuilding Together article on page four of the May 13 issue of the *Evergreen Times* is http://www.digiclub.org/sofs/in dex.php?page_id=17&video_id=210.

We do have a choice – to be responsible

By Councilmember Rose Herrera
Special to the Times

When you chose to call San Jose home, you did not imagine a city with shuttered libraries, not enough police officers to respond to your call, or streets lined with graffiti. As your neighbor and your elected San Jose City Councilmember, I will not let that happen. That's why I'm willing to address the structural budget problems head on and get it fixed.

San Jose is facing another staggering budget deficit—\$115 million. We cannot continue facing deficits of this size year-after-year. Our city finances are in crisis. We are faced with tough choices—ones we have to make or suffer the consequences.

Choosing to ignore the problems will not make them go away. Some cities have ignored the problems of deficit spending so long that they have ruined their credit rating and have fallen in such a deep hole they no longer have the wherewithal to recover. Such is the case in the City of Vallejo, where in 2008 the city filed for bankruptcy and they are still feeling the repercussions three years later. That will not happen here.

We have done all the cuts that we can but still face a structural deficit. We have cut pay; we have reduced the workforce, streamlined processes, and redeployed resources. But more must be done. I co-authored an op-ed in the *San Jose Mercury News* on Saturday, May 21, 2011 explaining the need for long-term budget solutions.

It is important that all ideas are heard. A problem of this size needs to have collaborative solutions. Further, we owe it to the San Jose residents we represent to give everyone a chance to voice their opinion.

That's why on Tuesday, May 24, 2011, the City Council voted to have the City Manager analyze all the proposals put forward by the City Council, including the memo I co-signed, and to sit down with the employee unions to find a course of action

to fix San Jose's structural budget deficit.

Budget reform addresses structural budget deficit issues such as pensions, healthcare, disability retirement, sick leave payouts, vacation buybacks, overtime pay, and workers compensation. Budget reform is within reach. If we do it the San Jose way and make the solutions collaborative, we will all be better off.

This is not about employees versus everyone else. Anger at the employees is not constructive.

What is constructive is supporting the employee groups that have agreed to pay and benefit cuts to protect the very services they provide. We all have a favorite librarian or park worker. And likewise, they enjoy working with the public.

The employees understand that we do have choices and the choices we make have to be judged on the merits of the options. We can do nothing and head toward the Vallejo-style outcome or we can choose to find a balance of concessions and new service delivery models/efficiencies to save our city. I'm optimistic that we will do right thing and make the right choices.

All is not gloom and doom. As chair of the Community and

Economic Development Committee, I see exciting opportunities ahead for developing San Jose as a leader in new technologies and as a result seeing tax revenue increase. As the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* refers to 2011 as "the bounceback year," I see Evergreen contributing to this bounceback in local economics.

As always, my office is here to assist you. If you have any issues or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us at district8@sanjoseca.gov.

Save the date: Please join me on Friday, June 3, 2011 for a free showing of the HBO documentary "War torn." RSVP is required. Contact sbsmtickets@yahoo.com or call (408) 235-9835.

Sign up for the District 8 Newsletter: www.sanjoseca.gov/district8.



District 8 Report

By Rose Herrera
City Councilmember

Let us hear from you!

Send letters via email to
jeanne@timesmediainc.com
or via postal mail to:

The Evergreen Times
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